REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to particularly point out the nature of the combination of dopant and metal sources that are precursors to the anionic clay. The combination involves the incorporation and homogeneous dispersion of the dopant and metal sources. Support for the amendment may be found in the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6 of the instant text and the next following paragraph.

The instant text precisely describes how doping that achieves incorporation and homogeneous dispersion in metal sources may be carried out. Line 23, page 7 through line 20, page 11 of the text is entirely devoted to processes for the doping of boehmite. The last paragraph on page 11 describes the doping of magnesium source and brucite.

References '672 and '196 teach to *add* additives to the aluminum source or the magnesium source. There is nothing in these references to suggest that *addition* involves more than preparing a physical mixture of the additive and the aluminum or magnesium source. There is certainly no hint to the detailed processes described in the instant text as mentioned above.

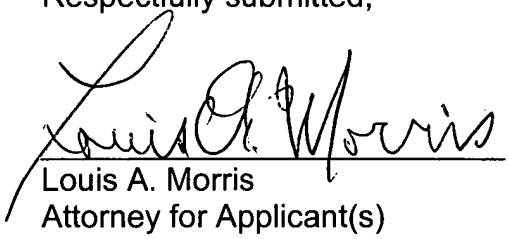
A doped anionic clay according to claim 1 requires the use of a starting material in which the dopant is already incorporated and dispersed therein. The problem associated with a physical mixture of additive and aluminum or magnesium source, such as disclosed in '196, is that the amount of additive ending up in the anionic clay is uncertain. Furthermore, if the additive is a water-soluble salt, the pH of the aqueous suspension will determine whether or not the salt precipitates and, consequently, whether or not the additive can end-up in or on the anionic clay. Even if it precipitates, the question remains whether it precipitates in or on the anionic clay or as a separate phase next to the anionic clay. Hence, the amount and dispersion of the additive ending up in the anionic

clay cannot be easily controlled by the prior art process (present application, page 5, lines 3-9).

This problem is solved by having the dopant already incorporated and dispersed in the starting material, i.e. by using doped boehmite, doped MgO, or doped brucite as starting material (present application, page 6, lines 4-9), that has been doped in the manner as described in the instant text.

No prior art cited by the Examiner gives any hint to the use of doped precursors in the making of anionic clay as described in the instant text and as now claimed. The present invention is novel and unobvious over the prior art. An early allowance of the instant claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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